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INTERMINISTERIAL TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE

Report to

Deputy Minister of Education

Deputy Minister of Labour

June, 1972



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Report to Deputy Minister of Education
and to Deputy Minister of Labour
from the
Interministerial Textbook Committee

Preamble

The long-term project which reaches its culmination in this Report had its genesis in a statement made by Premier William Davis, then Minister of Education, in May, 1965 to the Ontario Legislature:

In cooperation with the Ontario Human Rights Commission and its Director, Dr. Daniel Hill, we are about to make a thorough examination of all school textbooks, not just for the purpose of removing material which may be offensive to any of the groups which make up our multi-national family, but more important, to make sure that our textbooks do contain the type of material which does full justice to the contribution of many people to the development of our Province and Nation.

The urgency of this examination was enhanced by the community complaints made to the Human Rights Commission by concerned citizens and organizations regarding distortions, omissions and other expressions of prejudice in textbooks. These complaints reflected a new Ontario, with a radically

changed population composition as a result of large-scale immigration since the end of World War II. The presence of many, and numerically large, new minority groups, joining fellow nationals--or their descendants--who had come to Canada in the past, made the encouragement of a truly multicultural view of Canada a matter of immediate and vital necessity.

In implementation of Mr. Davis' statement of policy, and to meet the new needs created by changing social conditions, two studies were made. One was initiated by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, carried out by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and has been published in book form under the title Teaching Prejudice. The Commission launched this study under the broad mandate given to it in Section 9 of the Ontario Human Rights Code to "forward the principles" of the Code and seek to pervade the Ontario community with the spirit of the Code.

The other study is an internal report of the Ministry of Education. Both studies conclude with recommendations which were the subject of this Committee's deliberations, with the aim of turning the two sets of recommendations into recommendations for Government action.

This Committee was formed in November, 1971 at the request of Dr. E. E. Stewart, Deputy Minister of Education, and the then Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. T. M. Eberlee,

The Chairman of the Committee was Dr. Daniel G. Hill, Chairman of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Members were Dr. Lita-Rose Betcherman, a Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission and a former Director of the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Labour, and Messrs Gordon Nelson and Peter Wiseman, former members of the Curriculum Branch, Ministry of Education. Secretary of the Committee was Mr. Harold B. Attin, of the Human Rights Commission staff.

This Committee has proceeded on the assumption-- indeed conviction--that the Ontario Government, having drawn inspiration from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in all its human rights legislation since 1948, is conscious of its obligation to the people of this Province to give community reality to the exhortations of this Declaration regarding education. That document lists the right to education among the basic rights of all mankind. Article 26, Section 2 of the Declaration is as follows:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Thus education is interpreted in the light of the Declaration's guiding principle of equal treatment for all peoples, both for minorities within countries and for nationals of one country vis-à-vis the nationals of another country. It is to be noted in particular that an objective of education, as envisaged by the Declaration, is to promote understanding and friendship among all nations, and all racial and religious groups. Another aim is to develop a clear and well-informed civic sense, concerned with the welfare of the nation, the world, and world peace. A part of the civic sense is the consciousness of duties toward the community, for man may claim his rights, in the name of freedom and justice, only insofar as he consents to assume his duties and becomes aware that the members of every human community are all interdependent.

The world-wide application of the article in the Declaration dealing with education has resulted in many developments, including the reform of curricula methods. In the last decade, education, which was long considered as a nonproductive outlay, has been recognized as a primary factor in progress, as an integral part of economic and social development. Schooling is now regarded as a valuable investment, contributing to the wealth of the country, in addition to its more basic purpose of enabling the individual to attain his full potential as a human being.

This committee has considered itself fortunate to have two studies of textbook bias marked by high standards of thoroughness and quality on which to base its recommendations to the Government. It is this Committee's hope that the implementation of its recommendations will, in the near future, produce a climate of opinion and intergroup relations characterized by genuine enlightenment in which the school children of today will grow into the citizens of tomorrow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A Accepting the premises or facts that
- progress toward a solution to the problem of fairness in representation of racial, cultural and minority groups in social science textbooks should proceed with deliberation and careful consideration, to inspire the confidence of all segments of the community and interested parties;
 - that procedures are already in use in the Curriculum Development Branch of the Ministry of Education for evaluation of submitted books to identify bias as well as for academic content;
 - that the Ministry of Education has a statutory responsibility for the evaluation and authorization of school textbooks;

We Recommend that

- I --the Ministry of Education continue its present procedures, implement the recommendations in this report as they apply to the Ministry of Education, and devise additional procedures as required;
- II --an additional procedure be established for the evaluation of textbooks to identify bias as follows.
 - (1) Consultative services of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Women's Bureau be made available for the evaluation of textbooks to identify bias.
 - (2) Publishers be notified through the textbook publisher relations office of the Curriculum

Development Branch that they have two alternative procedures in the matter of review to identify bias in a manuscript or book (as indicated on chart):

- (a) a publisher or author may submit a complete manuscript to the Ontario Human Rights Commission or the Women's Bureau;
- (b) a publisher may submit a book to the Curriculum Development Branch in the traditional way.

(3) In the case described in (a), an evaluator(s) will be selected and the Commission or the Women's Bureau will forward the manuscript to the person(s) or organization. The qualifications of evaluators to identify bias should include a scholarly background and training in problems of racial and cultural minorities. The Commission or the Women's Bureau will consider the report of the evaluation and incorporate it, along with its own comments, in a memorandum which will be returned with the manuscript to the publisher or author. When and if the manuscript is then printed, the publisher should attach the memorandum to the book when submitting it to the Curriculum Development Branch.

(4) In the case described in (b), the Curriculum Development Branch will process the book, with evaluation to identify bias as one element in the processing. Names

ALTERNATIVES FOR BIAS REVIEW

A

MANUSCRIPT
STAGE

B

COMPLETED
TEXT

Presented by
the Author or
Publisher to
the Ontario
Human Rights
Commission or
the Women's
Bureau

← (If the text, after
evaluation to
identify bias, is
deemed to require
extraordinary eval-
uation.)

→ Presented to the
Ministry of
Education

Text evaluated
for possible
inclusion in
Circular 14.

Note: If an evalua-
tion was made in the manu-
script stage, a report from
the Ontario Human Rights
Commission or the Women's
Bureau should be submitted
with the text by the
publisher.

of evaluators whose services may be used by the Branch will be supplied by the Human Rights Commission and the Women's Bureau upon request. If this evaluation shows strong indications of bias, the book will then be submitted to the Commission or the Women's Bureau for extraordinary evaluation. The resulting memorandum will be sent to the textbook publisher relations office of the Ministry of Education, with a copy to the publisher. The publisher will resubmit the book after changes have been made.

- B Accepting the premises or facts that
- publishers have a responsibility to produce books which are acceptable when presenting them to the Ministry of Education for authorization and listing on Circular 14;
 - that the Government of Ontario intends to see that the spirit of the Ontario Human Rights Code is expressed in the school textbooks of this Province, and that the Ministry of Education has the power to carry out this mandate;
 - that acceptable content involves good taste, avoidance of derogatory terms and anthropological errors, accurate accounts of the contributions of all groups to the Canadian community, a scholarly, balanced and up-to-date

treatment and presentation of controversial themes both in Canadian and world history, and indication of an awareness of what is of contemporary relevance; --that the Ministry of Education is already engaged in

- (1) revising curriculum guidelines to give a more accurate account of the role and status of minority groups and women;
- (2) urging local school boards that more than one text be used by a class;

We Recommend that

III--publishers be urged to inform their editors to pay close attention to the content of manuscripts from the above enumerated points of view, as well as with regard to the following:

- (1) the possibility of replacing one history survey course text covering a long period of time by several shorter works covering shorter periods of time, to avoid the omissions engendered by generalization and lack of space;
- (2) the indication that biased descriptions are those of a contemporaneous historical source and not those of the author, this to be done through direct quotation or explicit attribution;
- (3) the inclusion of pictures or diagrams which portray groups in a derogatory light be discouraged;

(4) depictions of Canadian life for younger age groups to include people with surnames representing our multicultural society and people with various economic and racial backgrounds.

- C Accepting the premises or facts that
- in the textbooks presently in use, girls and women appear to be depicted in a stereotyped role which is limited and out-of-date, and which might discourage optimum choice and performance on the part of female students;
 - the new feminine life styles require that the role of women be shown to be one of greater diversity than has hitherto been depicted;
 - sex-based prejudice and discrimination are sui generis, and different from racial discrimination, as the lesser extent of cultural consensus on sex prejudice indicates;
 - therefore, more documentation is needed on this newer subject and that only preliminary and superficial studies exist;

We Recommend that

- IV --a major research study be undertaken immediately to identify and assess sex-role stereotypes in textbooks,

for which purpose the Women's Bureau is prepared to discuss the study with appropriate persons;

- V --once the parameters of sex bias in textbooks are established, the procedures for evaluation to identify sex bias will be the same as for racial and religious bias.

- D Accepting the premises or facts that
- a transition period is necessary before the textbooks in use in this Province all fulfill the requirements regarding bias;
 - the Curriculum Development Branch has initiated the practice of asking publishers to re-submit for authorization books to be reprinted;
 - the most important weapon in combatting the effects of prejudice in all books is training in critical reading instead of total acceptance of the authority of the printed page;

We Recommend that

- VI --consideration be given to the use of the Evaluative Assertion Rating System and the tests for minimum treatment of a subject and degree of balance, as outlined in Teaching Prejudice, by both teachers and students, and that teacher organizations and teacher training colleges be enlisted in the dissemination of a knowledge of these techniques.

E Accepting the premises or facts that
--the treatment of world history, particularly wars, is an
 area where nationalistic bias has long been observed, and
 that efforts to correct such bias have been proceeding for
 many years, particularly in Europe;

We Recommend that

VII--information for the guidance of publishers, authors and
 bias evaluators be obtained by the establishment of
 communication between the Ministry of Education and/or
 the Commission and the Women's Bureau on the one hand
 and such bodies as UNESCO and the International Textbook
 Institute at Brunswick, West Germany on the other hand.

F Accepting the premises or facts that
--Circular 14 currently includes reference and supplementary
 books, as well as textbooks, and that the former are the
 source of much of the reported prejudice in textbooks by
 the public;
--the Ministry of Education has made the decision to
 extract Schedule E, reference and supplementary books and
 place them on a newly created Circular 15, to be called
 "Canadian Curriculum Materials", and to consist of learning
 materials of Canadian authorship and manufacture, thus
 separating these from textbooks which have been evaluated

to identify bias;

--a number of the books on Circular 14 reported to contain bias are already scheduled for deletion;

We Recommend that

VIII--the Ministry of Education encourage the production of books with scholarly, up-to-date information on the history and socio-economic status of minority groups in Canada and elsewhere, and on the dynamics of prejudice, and that these books be considered for listing in Circular 14 or Circular 15.

G Accepting the premises or facts that

--the critical examinations of textbooks already made show that bias is displayed against other groups such as the aged, trade unionists and political minorities;

We Recommend that

IX --consideration be given to in-depth research studies on the treatment of these groups for the information and further consideration of the Ministry of Education and all concerned parties.

H Accepting the premises or facts that
--there is a widespread interest in the subject of cultural,
 racial and minority representation in textbooks among the
 population of this Province;

We Recommend that

X --this Report forthwith be made a public document;

XI --the internal study by the Ministry of Education be made a
 public document.

 This Report and these recommendations are hereby submitted
for your consideration.

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Daniel G. Hill, Chairman
Chairman, Ontario Human Rights
Commission

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Lita-Rose Betcherman
Commissioner, Ontario Human
Rights Commission

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Gordon Nelson
Ministry of Education

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Peter Wiseman
Ministry of Education

